FAQ from Southern California Regional Evaluators' Meeting

Evaluation Framework

1. **County Commissions have been submitting data yet the statewide evaluation has yet to produce documentation of results. What is the assurance that the new evaluation framework will help to identify results achieved?**

   As shown in the 2003-04 Annual Report, Appendix D, the number of client level **intake** data submitted by counties ranged from 13,000 for some indicators to less than 4,000 for others. It should be noted only 29 counties submitted client level data. **Follow-up** client data submitted was less than 500 total for all indicators. To measure change (i.e. results) follow-up data on clients is needed, 500 was not a sufficient number to analyze for results. This year (04/05) we have received approximately 5,000-7,000 follow-ups (depending on the indicator). We will be able to present some results from this data. But again, the data represents only those counties that submitted client data with intakes and follow-ups. In the new Framework, counties will be responsible for evaluation results for their 100% funded programs. They will be sharing those documented results with the State's Center for Results. The State Commission will also be conducting some very specific in-depth studies that will document results on specific strategies, services, populations or program types.

2. **What do I need to do in my County to gear up for the new evaluation framework?**

   Please carefully review the Framework document and if you have questions contact your regional representative on the Evaluation Workgroup. The Evaluation Workgroup is currently developing TA support to assist counties in the transition to the new Framework. Please check the First 5 Association website and keep in contact with your regional representative for updates.

3. **How can we implement the approved framework so that grantee data needs are addressed, County Commission data needs are addressed, and State Commission data needs are addressed; that we minimize data collection burdens and develop shared key messages?**

   These are all areas that were of concern and addressed during the development of the Research and Evaluation Framework. Please review the Framework document carefully. As stated above, the Workgroup is working diligently to develop a TA plan to support counties in the transition. If you have questions please talk to your regional representative.

4. **We would like to see clear definition of terms – will that be developed as part of implementing actions for the evaluation framework?**
   Yes.

5. **If we as a county are functionally using the Results Based Accountability framework and are developing systematic performance measures and indicators, how do we reconcile this with the new statewide evaluation efforts?**
   Counties will be responsible for the evaluation of county funded programs. The Framework requires counties to report aggregated accountability data and asks that the county provide evaluation outcomes and reports to the State Commission. This in no way should impact the RBA process you are developing…however the positive local results you can demonstrate through RBA will greatly enhance the Statewide research and evaluation efforts.

Proposed Reporting Structure

6. **Regarding the proposed reporting structure – Currently grantees have reported on the primary modality. In the new framework, reporting will be focused on the primary result. Can you define the questions we wish to address statewide with the new framework?**
   Please see the Framework document (pg. 6-7) for a more detailed explanation. The basic questions are:
   a. Who is being served? (Demographics)
   b. How many are being served? (unduplicated counts)
   c. How much is being spent? On what? (by result area and services)
   d. Who is providing services?
   e. What results are being achieved?

7. **If we report funding on just the primary result area, we will not be capturing the effort for many of the investments in the result area 4 "systems Change". Systems change is rarely funded as the primary strategy. How are we going to address this gap in reporting?**
   Systems change is a very important part of what First 5 is doing and we want to capture it. Each county will need to determine how much of their funding goes to systems change. Additionally, this can be addressed through the narrative and any reports your county may generate**.**

8. **Whether we report funding against the primary project result or all of the program results related to a project, how can we assure that we are presenting a valid statewide picture of Commission investments?**

That is a determination each county will need to grapple with as they review their annual report before it is submitted to the State. If every county's annual report accurately reflects their investments, the Center for Results will summarize and analyze the submitted data to develop a valid state picture. The analysis and validity of the results are totally dependent on the validity of the submitted data.

9. **Can you confirm, will the aggregate county reporting requirement be by organization or by initiative? The preference is by initiative.**
   It is not by organization or by initiative. The aggregate county reporting requirement is by Result Area and by services under that Result. Please page 20 in the Framework for more detailed information.

10. **We think that it is problematic and misleading to attach funding amounts to service areas. Instead they should be attached just to the result area or to strategies under the results area. Will there be a process to review some of these concerns?**
   We know that there are still many questions and concerns about the details and implementation of the Framework. The Evaluation Workgroup is currently working on a TA plan to inform and support counties in the transition to the Framework. The goal was to balance the needs of the State Commission, the needs of the County Commissions and also be responsive to other important stakeholders. The Workgroup made great efforts to keep county commissions updated on the progress of its work and to solicit feedback and input. The TA process, currently in development, will address county concerns and can also share the rationale behind the Workgroup's decisions. Meanwhile, please contact your regional representative on the Evaluation Workgroup with your questions and suggestions so the Workgroup can discuss them.

Implementation

11. **What is the implementation plan for the evaluation framework including timelines, tasks and processes?**
   The Workgroup is currently working on the implementation plan, timeline, and TA support. The new Framework requirements will be effective beginning July 1, 2006.

12. **Will the implementation plan include a clear definition of terms such as duplicated / unduplicated, what constitutes a service (hour, class, and series of classes)?**
   Yes, there will be clear definitions of common terms. The draft list of services can be found in the Framework on page 20.

Matching Grant Programs

13. **Can we now report (import) CARES data from that system now that the State owns the reporting system? There is an interest in being able to interface the CARES database at the county level to reduce duplication of entry and ability for the county to include the data in county reporting.**

    We will be working on doing that once we have a technology contractor hired.